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Duquesne University:



PAPERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE.

VIII.

DIARY
OF
CAPTAIN THOMAS RODNEY,
1776—1777.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION.

BY
CÆSAR A. RODNEY,
HIS GREAT-GRANDSON.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE.
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PREFACE.

THIS paper was read before the Historical Society of Delaware by the late Cæsar A. Rodney, on January 2, 1877. His brother, Mr. John M. C. Rodney, at the request of the society, has kindly permitted its publication.

At a stated meeting of the Historical Society of Delaware, held at its rooms in the city of Wilmington, on Monday, the 15th day of September, 1884, the following minute of the death of Cæsar A. Rodney, submitted by Judge Wales, was adopted and ordered to be entered on the journal:

“Since the last meeting of this society it has lost one of its most valued and active members by the death of Cæsar A. Rodney, which occurred on the 23d day of June, in the present year.

“By this sad event we have been deprived of the companionship and assistance of one who always took a zealous interest in the welfare of the society, and was ever ready by his personal services and contributions to promote its aims. He bore a name that has long been honorably associated with the history of Delaware, and he felt a just and worthy pride in the fame and distinction achieved by his ancestors. The occasional selections made by him from family papers

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in his possession, and read before us, will not be forgotten at this moment.

“At the time of his decease Mr. Rodney had not passed the meridian of life. His youth and manhood had been spent in this city, where he was well known both in business and social circles. As a man of business he was intelligent, industrious, practical, and upright. Public-spirited and capable, he was at different times intrusted by his fellow-citizens with official duties, which he faithfully and efficiently performed. The bent of his mind was toward the study of chemistry and the natural sciences, in which he had made considerable progress. Nor did he confine himself to only a theoretical investigation of these subjects. He was ingenious as well as studious, and became, to a very creditable extent, a successful inventor. While at the head of a large and important manufacturing establishment, his scientific acquirements and practical knowledge enabled him to manage its affairs with so much skill and judgment as to change an unsuccessful concern into a most profitable investment for its owners.

“In domestic and social life Mr. Rodney was beloved and esteemed by his kindred and friends for his unselfish and generous nature. Well informed, an instructive companion, kindly attentive and helpful to young and old, and regardful of the ‘small, sweet courtesies of life,’ his death—untimely as it appears to us—has left a wide and painful void, not only in his own home and in the membership of this society, but also in the many households where his genial disposition and cordial manner made him always a welcome guest.”

INTRODUCTION.

MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE sinking of the sun behind the western hills to-night completes the century that has elapsed since the close of the second battle of Trenton, or, as the writers of that period frequently called it, the cannonade at Trent Town.

And as the first rays of the rising sun break forth to-morrow morning, they will mark the passage of an hundred years since the glorious battle of Princeton was fought and won; a battle that, in the short space of one-half hour, decided the fate of the United States, and assured the world that they would maintain their position among the nations of the earth.

It therefore seems appropriate, at this centennial anniversary of so important an event, that we should recall to mind the history of that period, and that any additional information that exists concerning it should be made public.

Our historians have told us of the dreadful condition of public affairs on the 1st of December, 1776, when the cause

of American Independence seemed lost forever, and have fully informed us how that brilliant campaign, which began on the night of Christmas, 1776, and ended when our army encamped at Morristown, rolled back the dark cloud that threatened our national existence.

I shall not, therefore, attempt to present a compilation of what has already been written and re-written so often, but will at once make known to you the facts in regard to the remarkable narrative that I shall bring to your notice this evening.

The papers and correspondence of my great-grandfather, Thomas Rodney, and his brother, Cæsar Rodney, having come by descent into my possession, I find among them a vast amount of interesting matter, correspondence, and official documents relating to the early history of our nation, and especially of our own Diamond State; and none exceed in interest those which relate to the Princeton campaign of 1776 and 1777. The historical material in my hands bearing upon this period is so voluminous that it might, with slight amplification, be readily extended into a bulky volume, but want of time will, in this paper, compel me to exclude much I would gladly introduce and confine myself to the main facts, without commenting at all upon many points which require further explanation.

The history of General Cæsar Rodney, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, is too well known to require repetition here, but of his youngest brother it may be necessary to say that he was born on the 4th of June, 1744, near Dover, and during his life filled many positions of trust and honor.

I find that he was register and judge of the Probate of Wills and clerk of the Orphans' Court. Member of the General Assembly many times, member of the Council of Safety, and member and president of the Committee of Inspection of Kent County. He was judge of the Admiralty Court and of the Court of Common Pleas of the Delaware State; twice a delegate to the Continental Congress, which he entered for the first time in 1781, and in 1803 was appointed chief-justice of the Mississippi Territory, and died at Natchez in 1811. The town of Rodney, on the Mississippi, was named for him.

During the war Thomas Rodney was captain of a militia company known as the Dover Light Infantry, and was afterwards colonel of the Eighth Regiment of Delaware militia.

Early in September, 1775, the Council of Safety of the Three Lower Counties, a body composed of seven members from each county, and charged by the General Assembly with the safety of the colony, organized the militia of the counties by causing lists to be made of all the able-bodied male inhabitants, between the ages of sixteen and fifty years, and enrolling them into companies. From these companies eight regiments were formed,—three from New Castle, two from Kent, and three from Sussex Counties,—and John McKinly, Cæsar Rodney, and John Dagworthy were appointed brigadier-generals. Cæsar Rodney was subsequently made major-general and commander-in-chief of the State forces. In this capacity he twice led a portion of the State troops into active service, once during the Princeton campaign, during which he was placed in com-

mand of the post at Trenton, where he remained nearly two months, and again during the invasion of the State previous to the battle of Brandywine.

The general's star indicating the military rank of Cæsar Rodney, and worn by him during the war, is now in my possession. It is rather rudely cut from a thin sheet of silver, and closely resembles a policeman's badge of the present day. It was worn upon the left breast instead of upon the shoulder-strap, as is the custom of the present time.

Under the authority of the Council of Safety the regiment of Colonel Haslet was raised, he having been previously appointed colonel of one of the militia regiments from Kent County; but its glorious deeds, its trials and its sufferings, have been so ably described by Colonel Whiteley in a recent paper as to leave but little more to be said concerning it.

But the time for which Colonel Haslet's regiment enlisted expired on the 1st of January, 1777, and another, a Continental regiment, was being organized at home, in Delaware, to replace it.

These facts induced most of the officers and men of the small remaining portion of this regiment to overlook the necessities of the situation, and return home in the hope of obtaining positions in the permanent organization, so that at the battle of Trenton the First Delaware Regiment was represented by only four officers, Colonel Haslet, Captain Holland, Doctor Gilder, and Ensign Wilson, and two privates, according to Colonel Haslet's own statement, and when the army reached Morristown, the ad-

jutant, Captain Holland, was the only member of the regiment left.

In September, 1776, a regiment of militia, under command of Colonel Samuel Patterson, left this State to join the "Flying Camp." They were to serve for three months, and left the army promptly on the expiration of their term of service, on the 1st of December following, just when their aid was most needed.

In the alarming crisis which arose at this time, Congress, then sitting at Philadelphia, made the most urgent appeal to the militia of the neighboring States to turn out and support General Washington until the Continental army could be reorganized, and under this appeal three companies of New Castle County militia left Wilmington on the 16th day of December, 1776, under command of Major Thomas Duff.

It appears from a note of General Mifflin that Major Duff, through a mistake of orders, did not join him on the march to Trenton, and therefore the troops under his command were not in the engagements at either Trenton or Princeton, and I can find no evidence that there were any Delaware troops engaged in those battles except the few that remained of Colonel Haslet's First Delaware, and one company of Kent County militia under command of Captain Thomas Rodney.

When the militia of the colony was organized, Thomas Rodney was elected captain of the Dover company.

Acting under the dictates of patriotism, and in obedience to the appeal of the Continental Congress, a portion of this company marched from Dover on the 14th of December,

1776, under command of their captain, who, during the whole time they were in service, kept an accurate daily record of every occurrence of any importance. This journal I now propose to read to you as it was written one hundred years ago.

DIARY
OF
CAPTAIN THOMAS RODNEY,
1776—1777.

THE JOURNAL begins:

In December 1776 the British army had driven General Washington with the shattered remains of the American Army over the Delaware, and he encamped in Bucks County; and at this time about 1200 of the Citizens of Philadelphia turned out and took post at Bristol.

Part of the British Army were encamped at Trenton, Bordentown, and Burlington and the British were in possession of all Jersey as well as York.

Only Gen. Lee, with a few men, was still on the mountains east of the Raritan.

Congress had determined to move from Philadelphia to Baltimore.

The ruling council of our own state had met twice and seperated without doing anything, and a general dismay seemed spread over the Country.

At this time and seeing our ruling council seperate the second time, without coming to any resolution, I felt my mind anxious and uneasy, and went over to my brother

[Cæsar Rodney] and he was much concerned; said everything appeared gloomy and unfortunate, that he was very apprehensive for the safety of our cause.

When I left him, I consulted the officers and several of the company, and they voluntarily agreed to turn out, and then I set up a paper inviting all those who would go to be prepared by a certain day.

And thirty-five of the infantry, including several others, entered into the association to go, and this company marched from Dover the 14th of December 1776, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, for camp, the ground being covered with snow several inches deep.

That night they reached the Cross Roads [Duck Creek, now Smyrna] but as I could not get the baggage wagon off in time, I did not set off until next morning.

December 15th 1776

This morning I took my leave of my wife and children and reached the Cross Roads about 10 o'clock, and found that the company had marched. I stayed there to get breakfast and was detained there until 2 o'clock before I got off the Baggage wagon. I overtook the company at the Trap, [now McDonough] and pushed them on to the Red Lion that night, but the baggage wagon did not get up until 12 o'clock, and the men were a little uneasy about their blankets but continued in high spirits.

December 16th 1776

This day we reached Wilmington, where we encamped all night. On our way we called at Col. Pattersons near

Christeen and were fitted out with knapsacks, canteens &c.

From Christiana Bridge we saw the road full of the citizens of Philadelphia who had fled with their families and effects, expecting the British army would be there in a few days. We had the pleasure of receiving the good wishes of thousands on our way and of seeing our example enspirit the people to follow it. We passed one company on the road, and two had left Wilmington this morning. [The New Castle County militia under Major Thomas Duff.] At Christiana Bridge I met with Mr. McKean, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and several other members of Congress on their way from Philadelphia to Baltimore, and spent the evening with them, and Mr. McKean sat late with me and gave me an account of all the information Congress had received, and observed that everything was very gloomy and doubtful and that the chief hope that remained, was, that Gen. Lee, who was on the mountains in the rear of the enemy, would be able to effect some lucky stroke that would prevent the enemy's crossing the Delaware, but if nothing of this sort happened, Congress would be obliged to authorize the Commander in Chief to obtain the best terms that could be had from the enemy. I desired him not to despair, and urged, that the members might not say anything on their way that would discourage the people, but would endeavor by all means in their power to animate them, and to make use of what we were doing as an example;—that the spirited exertion of a few men at such a time would have great weight, and assured him that he would soon hear of a favorable turn in our affairs.

December 17th 1776

This day we travelled from Wilmington to Chester where we put up all night. All of our men continue in high spirits and good health. We are told that Gen. Lee is taken prisoner.

December 18th 1776

To-day we reached the City of Philadelphia and were quartered in the house of Samuel Emlens at the corner of Walnut Street and the Dock. All the company are in good health and spirits but some have blistered feet.

When we arrived at Philadelphia it made a horrid appearance, more than half the houses appeared deserted, and the families that remained were shut up in their houses, and nobody appeared in the streets.

There was no military of any kind in the City, only Gen. Putnam, who was there to give orders to any militia that might come in. I had a sentinel placed at the General's door, and others to guard the City that night, and then went to the Coffee house, but there was no one there.

After sometime I found Bradford and made him bring a bowl of punch and some biscuit, and I sat in a box alone. I asked Bradford what was the reason no one appeared, and he said that they expected the British in every moment and were afraid.

I told them they need not be afraid, I would engage to guard the City that night, but he soon ran out again, seeming afraid to stay, and I sat in a box alone; but afterwhile Capt. Fortner came to peep in, and seeing an officer in the Coffee house, took me to be a British officer, and went round secretly to Bradford, who told him who it was, and

then they both came in; I asked them where all the whigs were, and they said there were but few in town, and they expected the British in town every moment and were afraid to be out. I told them again they need not be afraid. They then went out and brought in a good deal of company and we stayed about an hour and then broke up.

December 19th 1776

This morning I waited on Gen. Putnam, who commands here, and received orders to get ready immediately and march to join Gen. Washington.

To-day we began to draw rations and live as soldiers. The remainder of the day was spent in getting ready to march to headquarters. This evening I was notified by general orders, that all the militia must appear at the General's at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

This morning I went to see Joshua Fisher's family, who is uncle to my wife but are quakers and very great tories.

They seemed glad to see me, were all extremely cheerful, said that the contest would soon be over now; that the British would be in town in a day or two and invited me to sup at Thomas Fisher's that evening, which I accepted, and accordingly went.

Thomas, Samuel, and Miers Fisher all supped there with me. The entertainment was exceedingly clever, and they were all particularly friendly to me. After supper several kinds of good wine were placed on the table and I drank, what was usual with me, about three glasses of Madeira.

They then began on the times; they informed me, I believe very truly, of the situation of the British and Ameri-

can armies; told me Gen. Lee was certainly taken prisoner; that there was no prospect that America could make any further exertions.

That it was, therefore, in vain for me to attempt anything more; that now was a favorable time to relinquish all further opposition.—That they would engage, that neither myself nor my brother nor any of my friends should be injured, and that I might expect on the contrary any favor I would ask, as they expected the British in town in a few days and would interest themselves in every degree in my favor; and that it was necessary for myself, my family and friends that I should embrace this favorable occasion and much more to the same effect.

I answered them by pointing out those circumstances that were still favorable to America, and concluded by assuring them that I should not change my determination, that I knew my business and should not return until the British were beaten, but they treated this as levity and concluded that I was an obstinate man, and must be left to take my own way. I told them I was perhaps better informed than they were, and should most certainly proceed in my enterprise; and then as it was now pretty late parted from them and went to my quarters.

December 20th 1776

At 9 o'clock this morning we appeared at the General's door but found no other companies paraded. The General was not up, but his aid appeared, and I requested that the general would dismiss us as we were under marching orders, which he immediately did.

A continual snow fell last night and cleared up with rain and sleet and the weather is very cold. To-day in getting ready to march I went through the City and found it almost deserted by the inhabitants, and looking as if it had been plundered, and scarcely a chair can be had at a public house to sit down in; or a meal of vituals to be had, but to our great joy we saw the streets full of militia and hundreds pouring in every hour.

In the evening I sent the company to the mustermaster with the Lieutenant, who not carrying the muster rolls, the drunken Mustermaster cursed them and sent them back, which vexed them very much.

I gave orders that the company should be ready to march next morning by daylight.

December 21st 1776

This morning early the company paraded and I carried them to the mustermaster and had them mustered, and marched immediately. The roads being very deep we only got to the Red Lion on the Bristol road 13 miles from Philadelphia where we stayed all night.

(Sunday) December 22d 1776

About 2 o'clock to-day we reached Bristol, where the Philadelphia volunteers are encamped. I waited on Gen. Cadwalader, who commands here, to show him my orders, but he was engaged, and upon waiting on the Quartermaster found that there were no quarters in Bristol, but Col. Morris the quartermaster immediately sent us out to William Coxe's and Andrew Allens on the banks of the Neshaminy creek

where he appointed our quarters, about 2 miles from Bristol. The Lieutenant and half the company were placed at Mr. Coxes and the other half at Mrs. Allens, who prepared a room for me, and requested that I would stay at her house to prevent her being insulted, as her husband and brothers had fled to the enemy, and she therefore had been insulted some days before. But nothing of this sort happened afterwards, as I would scorn to insult a woman or permit it to be done, for the offence of her husband: we turned out to protect and defend the innocent not to insult them. Our cause is a just one and should be maintained with Justice. Both families treat myself and the whole company with the greatest kindness and politeness.

[Let me here mention that these families were people of wealth and importance in their day. Andrew Allen had been a member of the Continental Congress and was the son of William Allen, formerly chief-justice of Pennsylvania and mayor of Philadelphia. One of William Allen's daughters had married John Penn, proprietor and governor of Pennsylvania.]

This evening I received an order from Gen. Cadwalader to wait on him immediately.

I waited on him, and he asked me what number of men I had brought, I told him 35. He asked me if that was all. I told him it was, and I thought they were enough, and asked him how many he had there, and how many General Washington had left. He said he had had 1200 but many had gone off one way or another, but he supposed there was still 800 left; that General Washington had about 1500 and there was some more, that had been under Gen. Lee,

who was taken prisoner. That his capture had damped the spirit of the army very much, and everything looked very gloomy.

I told him I was sorry for Gen. Lee because I knew him personally and had a regard for him, but I did not view his capture as unfavorable but as an advantage; that too much confidence had been put in General Lee, that this must have greatly embarrassed the commander in chief, as he was afraid to do anything without consulting Gen. Lee, but now he would be at liberty to exert his own talents.

He asked what could be done. I answered, that in an enterprise a small number was best, that 500 men was enough to surprise any of the British Posts on the Delaware, he then said that General Washington intended some enterprise of that sort but was waiting for men to make him strong enough, and that Gen. Reed had gone down to Philadelphia to see what militia had come in, and on his return, if there was any prospect of success something would be done.

I replied that there was no occasion for more men, that there was enough for any enterprise, and the measure ought not to be delayed a moment on that account, for now was a favorable time, and I had not the least doubt of success, but if men were wanting, there would soon be enough, for the roads were full from Virginia and Pittsburgh to Philadelphia.

Upon this, Gen. Cadwalader's countenance began to flame and he asked me if I would stay there. I told him I was ordered to headquarters and wanted to get there to urge expedition. He said the Commander in Chief had directed him to stop all militia there, and if I would stay he would

send an express to him. I told him if he would send an express and write what I had said, to the General, and he said I might stay, then I would do so. So Gen. Cadwalader sent an express immediately to the General and I returned to my quarters at Mrs. Allens.

In the night the express returned with orders from General Washington that I might stay at this post and Gen. Cadwalader sent the express out to my quarters and I accordingly appeared at Bristol, where Gen. Cadwalader informed me that he wanted us to join a party of Philadelphia militia that night, to make a tour into the Jersey and harrass the enemy, and asked me if the men were fit to go. I told him that a number of them were, and would willingly go, but as we had marched a hundred and odd miles, some few of them were too much jaded, which I begged he would permit me to leave. However, when he heard they had marched so far he would not permit any of us to go.

The rest of the troops paraded at 2 o'clock that night, but an express from Col. Griffin informing them he was not prepared to join them stopped the expedition.

December 23d 1776

This morning at 9 o'clock I waited on the General and just as I reached there he received a second express from Gen. Washington countermanding our going over the River, and informing him that he had determined on his plan of attacking the British posts on Christmas night, and would not have any of the troops harrassed in the meantime, but that they should be prepared against that time for the enterprise, and he would send his plan in a day or two; this was com-

municated to me by Gen. Cadwalader and I was rejoiced and assured him we should certainly be successful.

The General pressed me much to be with him, and seemed much animated with my decided sentiments.

December 24th 1776

We continued in our quarters this day and refreshed ourselves a little from the fatigue of a long march.

I waited on the General this morning and he privately communicated to me all the important information, and spoke with the utmost openness, when we were alone, his own sentiments.

He requested me to dine with him, but I could not take the time and he then asked that I would dine with him tomorrow [Christmas day].

December 25th 1776

I waited on the General this morning and was informed by him that he had obtained leave of General Washington to join my company to his Brigade and ordered that the company should be ready to receive marching orders to-night.

Yesterday the Quartermaster General, at Bristol, sent wagons down to Coxes and Allens to take all their grain and forage but I would not permit them to touch it unless they bought it, so they left it and went away.

To-day a Brigade of New England Continental troops were sent down to quarter here, and the Quartermaster came down to turn out both families, but I would not allow

them to be disturbed and wrote to Gen. Cadwalader for instructions.

When Gen. Hitchcock, the commander, was informed of the matter, he politely replied he would not attempt to disturb them nor would he put the families to any inconvenience. Mr. Cox, thereupon, offered the field officers one of his rooms and Mrs. Allens house for the rest of his officers, upon my agreeing to move to his house, and Mrs. Allen, in consideration of such civilities, consented to do the same.

About dark I received orders to march immediately to Neshaminy ferry and await orders.

We march off immediately without the knowledge of the families where we were staying and met Col. Matlack at the ferry, he being the advance party of the brigade from Bristol. We soon received orders to march to Dunkers ferry on the Delaware, and after we arrived there the whole brigade came up, and also Col. Hitchcock Brigade of New England Regulars.

Our light Infantry Battalion [the Dover company and four companies of Philadelphia militia under Capt. George Henry] were embarked in boats to cover the landing of the Brigade.

When we reached the Jersey shore we were obliged to land on the ice, 150 yards from the shore; the River was also very full of floating ice, and the wind was blowing very hard, and the night was very dark and cold, and we had great difficulty in crossing but the night was very favorable to the enterprise. We advanced about two hundred yards from the shore and formed in four columns of double files.

About 600 of the light troops got over, but the boats with the artillery were carried away in the ice and could not be got over.

After waiting about 3 hours we were informed that Gens. Cadwalader and Hitchcock had given up the expedition, and that the troops that were over were ordered back. This greatly irritated the troops that had crossed the River and they proposed making the attack without both the Generals and the artillery but it was urged, that if Gen. Washington should be unsuccessful and we also, the cause would be lost, but if our force remained intact it would still keep up the spirit of America; therefor this course was abandoned.

We had to wait about three hours more to cover the retreat, by which time the wind blew very hard and there was much rain and sleet, and there was so much floating ice in the River that we had the greatest difficulty to get over again, and some of our men did not get over that night. As soon as I reached the Pennsylvania shore I received orders to march to our quarters, where I arrived a little before daylight very wet and cold.

December 26th 1776

About 12 o'clock the remainder of my company came in and in the evening we heard of General Washingtons success at Trenton and that he had captured 900 Hessians.

The previous disposition of the Commander in Chief was for attacking Trenton, Bordentown and Burlington all on Christmas night. That against Trenton was to be conducted by himself; that against Bordentown by Gen. Ewing and that against Burlington by Gens. Cadwalader Reed and

Hitchcock. The expedition against Bordentown has also failed, and I am inclined to think that General Washington meant these only as feints, for if our Generals had been in earnest, we could have taken Burlington with the light troops alone.

About dark notwithstanding our fatigue I received orders to appear at Bristol before Daybreak to-morrow morning.

December 27th 1776

We got down to Bristol about Daylight, and the whole army under General Cadwalader began crossing about 10 o'clock, about one mile above Bristol.

The light Infantry covered the landing as before and about 3 o'clock the whole army got in motion towards Burlington.

The Order of march was, first Col. Matlacks Rifle Battalion on the Right and Left in single file, advanced about 200 yards before the Infantry; Next the Light Infantry in four columns of double files. Next the Artillery, and then the main column following in platoons, flanked at 200 yards by single files in the Woods.

In this order we reached Burlington about 9 o'clock, and took possession of the town, and when we had done this we found that the enemy had fled from there and all the adjacent parts in great precipitation. The General therefore gave orders that our light troops should march at 4 o'clock to-morrow morning. The troops were quartered in houses, but it being now 11 o'clock they had but about 4 hours to sleep.

This town is opposite Bristol on the River Delaware and

most of the houses are brick, but as it was dark when I went in and we left it before day I can give no description of it.

December 28th 1776

We left Burlington at 4 o'clock this morning and passed on the Great Road to Bordentown.

Along the road we saw many Hessian posts at Bridges and Cross Roads; they were chiefly made with rails and covered with straw, all deserted. The whole country as we passed appeared one scene of devastation and ruin. Neither Hay, Straw, Grain, or any live stock or poultry to be seen.

We got to within half a mile of Bordentown about 9 o'clock, and made a halt just at the foot of a bridge, where we heard that the enemy had deserted the town and were about five miles off but were disposed to return, and that some of their light horse were expected every minute.

We then posted ourselves in a cornfield, so as to be convenient to surround the town; and set posts on all the roads, but after waiting thus about an hour were informed that the enemy were flying with all speed.

We then marched into the town, in several detachments and took possession of a large quantity of stores which the enemy had left, then went into quarters and refreshed ourselves and in about 2 hours the main body of the army came up.

This little town is pleasantly situated on the River Delaware about 10 miles above Burlington, the houses are chiefly brick, and several of them large elegant and neat, but they all look like barns and stables, full of Hay, Straw, dirt and

nastiness, and everything valuable about them destroyed and carried off, and all the inhabitants fled. Here had been the headquarters of Lord or Count Donop, one of the Hessian Generals, but it looked more like the headquarters of a swine herd. Mr. Bordens house had some hundred pounds worth of goods, and valuable furniture ruined and broken to pieces.

In the afternoon the General was informed that the enemy were at Allentown about 8 miles off, upon which, about dusk, he ordered the light troops to push forward and two battallions to follow. We went on about 4 miles to a little town called Crosswicks, chiefly, or all wooden houses built at the crossing of several roads. When we arrived there we received information that the enemy had left Allentown that morning and had gone forward about 8 miles further to a place called Hide town.

Some of the militia Colonels applied to our infantry to make a forced march that night and overhaul them. We had then been on duty four Days and nights, making forced marches without six hours sleep in the whole time; Whereupon the Infantry officers of all the companies unanimously declared it was madness to attempt it; for it would use up all our brave men not one of whom had yet given out but were dreadfully fatigued. However a few Riflemen and fresh men were sent off, and the Light troops were to reinforce them in the morning. Here we got good comfortable quarters, and something refreshing to eat and drink, and several prisoners were picked up in the neighborhood that night, One of them a member of the Kings foot guard, a very tall, likely fellow, said that he had been sent on Christ-

mas day from Brunswick to Mount Holly with orders for the troops to retreat.

December 29th 1776

This morning about sunrise we set out to reinforce the troops that went forward last night, we marched on through Allentown without our stopping, and about half a mile beyond met the troops returning, with about 30 Bullocks and five Tories.

They had been forward about 10 miles to a place called Cranberry, but the enemy having information that our army was pursuing them closely, left that place about 10 o'clock at night in great precipitation, whereupon we all returned to Allentown and went into quarters.

This is a little village of wooden houses, but indifferently built on both sides of the road at a mill about 4 miles from Crosswicks.

In the afternoon was brought in the body of Isaac Pearson, who being found in the house with the other Tories that were taken, fled off. They shot two balls over his head to stop him, but as he persisted in making off, the next two were ordered to fire at him and one of their balls passed thro' his breast and he fell dead on the spot. He is said to have been very active in favor of the enemy.

Allentown December 30th 1776

We sent out several parties to-day to press horses and wagons and bring in provisions in which they succeeded very well, and the Light troops had the Day to rest here,

the main army being now at Crosswicks, having reached there yesterday.

To-day a circumstance happened that seems to have attached the Philadelphia officers of the Light infantry Regiment to me very much.

Capt. Francis Wade a vain blustering man of one of the city Battallions was appointed quartermaster General. Each Company of the Light Infantry have a neat light wagon for their baggage, and Capt. Wade ordered his wagon master to take these wagons to go and bring in forage, the Light Infantry officers refused them, but the quartermaster General sending back a peremptory order to seize them, Capt. George Henry the superior officer of the Philadelphia Light Infantry, submitted to the requisition, but all the other officers offended at this, came to me and I therefore went out and ordered the wagon master, who was putting in the horses to desist, and to inform the Q. M. G. that he should not have one of them, that we were subject, every moment, to be ordered out on parties and should not part with our wagons. The Q. M. G. was much offended, but could not help himself, and the officers were much pleased with my conduct.

December 31st 1776

Last night Gen. Cadwalader received information that General Lee was a prisoner in Brunswick under a guard of 250 men and this morning by day light our Light Troops were ordered to make a forced march to-day, and surprise the town in the dead of night, and bring him off.

We accordingly set off, and pushed on to Cranberry from

whence we were to go on horseback after night and execute the plan.

This is a little village scattered on both sides of the road, about 12 miles from Allentown. We stayed here and refreshed ourselves until dark, waiting the return of two spies, who had been sent to reconoitre Brunswick and the British troops that were on their way from Amboy.

On their return they brought accounts that these troops had become alarmed and had gone to reinforce Brunswick with 1500 men, which rendered our plan abortive, and being but five miles from the enemy we held a council of war and concluded it best to return. This sudden change alarmed the people very much at Cranberry, they expected the enemy were coming and Two very beautiful young ladies who had been very kind and polite at my quarters, being a whig family, were exceedingly distressed and hung around me in tears until I was obliged to tell them the true reason of our departure.

We accordingly marched back to Allentown through a very dark night and roads half leg deep which worried the troops exceedingly.

When we returned to Allentown my quarters were full of militia and there was no place to sit or lie down. I went to the door of my room, which was now occupied by three Pennsylvania field officers and politely requested them to let us go in and sit by the fire, but they sternly refused. I told them we had no other place to go and if they would not admit us willingly they must defend themselves, and thereupon drew my sword and opened the door. They then begged me to wait until they could light a candle, and

upon seeing our dress very politely invited us in and then spread the table, and covered it with good wine and ready dressed provisions of which they had great variety, and we spent the rest of the night in great festivity.

January 1st 1777

During this day at Allentown the troops were allowed to rest. [Colonel Haslet, who was with General Washington at Trenton, writes this day to General Rodney, at Dover, the following letter, which was the last he wrote: (Letter A.)]

Allentown January 2d 1777

[This day one hundred years ago.]

This morning we were called up at 2 o'clock under a pretended alarm that we were to be attacked by the enemy but by daylight we were ordered to march for Trenton, and when we reached Crosswicks found that the brigade had gone. We reached Trenton about 11 o'clock and found all the troops from our different posts in Jersey, collected and collecting there under Gen. Washington himself; and the regular troops were already properly disposed to receive the enemy, whose main body was then within a few miles and determined to dispossess us.

Trenton stands upon the River Delaware, with a creek called the Assanpink passing through the town across which there is a bridge.

The enemy came down on the upper side of this creek, through the town, and a number of our troops were posted with Riflemen and artillery to oppose their approach.

The main body of our army was drawn up on a plain

below, or on the lower side of the Assanpink, near the bridge, and the main force of our Artillery was posted on the banks and high ground along the creek in front of them.

Gen. Mercers brigade was posted about 2 miles up the creek, and the troops under Gen. Cadwalader were stationed in a field on the right about a mile from the town, on the main road, to prevent the enemy from flanking. We had five pieces of Artillery with our division and about 20 more in the field, near, and at the town. Our numbers were about five thousand and the enemy's about seven Thousand.

The attack began about 2 o'clock and a heavy fire upon both sides, chiefly from the artillery continued until dark.

At this time the enemy were left in possession of the upper part of the town, but we kept possession of the bridge, altho' the enemy attempted several times to carry it but were repulsed each time with great slaughter.

After sunset this afternoon the enemy came down in a very heavy column to force the bridge. The fire was very heavy and the Light troops were ordered to fly to the support of that important post, and as we drew near, I stepped out of the front to order my men to close up; at this time Martinas Sipple was about 10 steps behind the man next in front of him; I at once drew my sword and threatened to cut his head off if he did not keep close, he then sprang forward and I returned to the front. The enemy were soon defeated and retired and the American army also retired to the woods, where they encamped and built up fires.

I then had the roll called to see if any of our men were missing and Martinas was not to be found, but Leut. Mark McCall informed me, that immediately on my returning to

the head of the column, after making him close up, he fled out of the field.*

We lost but few men; the enemy considerably more. It is thought Gen. Washington did not intend to hold the upper part of the town.

January 3d 1777

At two o'clock this morning the ground having been frozen firm by a keen N. West wind secret orders were issued to each department and the whole army was at once put in motion, but no one knew what the Gen. meant to do. Some thought that we were going to attack the enemy in the rear; some that we were going to Princeton; the latter proved to be right. We went by a bye road on the right hand which made it about 16 miles; During this nocturnal march I, with the Dover Company and the Red Feather Company of Philadelphia Light Infantry led the van of the army and Capt. Henry with the other three companies of Philadelphia light Infantry brought up the rear.

The Van moved on all night in the most cool and determined order but on the march great confusion happened in the rear. There was a cry that they were surrounded by the Hessians and several corps of Militia broke and fled towards Bordentown but the rest of the column remained firm and pursued their march without disorder, but those who were frightened and fled did not recover from their panic until they reached Burlington.

* In justice to Martinus I must add that he afterwards joined the Delaware Regiment under Col. David Hall and became a brave and faithful soldier.

When we had proceeded to within a mile and a half of Princeton and the van had crossed Stony Brook, Gen. Washington ordered our Infantry to file off to one side of the road and halt. Gen. Sullivan was ordered to wheel to the right and flank the town on that side, and two Brigades were ordered to wheel to the Left, to make a circuit and surround the town on that side and as they went to break down the Bridge and post a party at the mill on the main road, to oppose the enemy's main army if they should pursue us from Trenton.

The third Division was composed of Gen. Mercers brigade of Continental troops, about 300 men, and Cadwaladers brigade of Philadelphia militia to which brigade the whole of our light Infantry Regiment was again annexed.

Mercers brigade marched in front and another corp of infantry brought up the rear.

My company flanked the whole brigade on the right in an Indian file so that my men were very much extended and distant from each other; I marched in front and was followed by sargeant McKnatt and next to him was Nehemiah Tilton [afterwards Lieut.-Col. Tilton].

Mercers brigade which was headed by Col. Haslet of Delaware on foot and Gen. Mercer on horseback was to march straight on to Princeton without Turning to the right or left.

It so happened that two Regiments of British troops that were on their march to Trenton to reinforce their army there, received intelligence of the movements of the American army (for the sun rose as we passed over Stony brook) and about a mile from Princeton they turned off from the

main road and posted themselves behind a long string of buildings and an orchard, on the straight road to Princeton.

The first two Divisions of our army therefore passed wide to the right and left and leaving them undiscovered went on to Princeton.

Gen. Mercers Brigade owing to some delay in arranging Cadwaladers men had advanced several hundred yards ahead and never discovered the enemy until he was turning the buildings they were posted behind, and then they were not more than fifty yards off.

He immediately formed his men, with great courage, and poured a heavy fire in upon the enemy, but they being greatly superior in number returned the fire and charged bayonets, and their onset was so fierce that Gen. Mercer fell mortally wounded and many of his officers were killed, and the brigade being effectually broken, began a disorderly flight.

Col. Haslet retired some small distance behind the buildings and endeavored to rally them, but receiving a bullet through his head, dropt dead on the spot and the whole brigade fled in confusion. At this instant Gen. Cadwalader's Philadelphia Brigade came up and the enemy checked by their appearance took post behind a fence and a ditch in front of the buildings before mentioned, and so extended themselves that every man could load and fire incessantly; the fence stood on low ground between two hills; on the hill behind the British line they had eight pieces of artillery which played incessantly with round and grape shot on our brigade, and the fire was extremely hot. Yet Gen. Cadwalader led up the head of the column with the greatest

bravery to within 50 yards of the enemy, but this was rashly done, for he was obliged to recoil; and leaving one piece of his artillery, he fell back about 40 yards and endeavored to form the brigade, and some companies did form and gave a few volleys but the fire of the enemy was so hot, that, at the sight of the regular troops running to the rear, the militia gave way and the whole brigade broke and most of them retired to a woods about 150 yards in the rear; but two pieces of artillery stood their ground and were served with great skill and bravery.

At this time a field officer was sent to order me to take post on the left of the artillery until the brigade should form again, and, with the Philadelphia Infantry keep up a fire from some stacks and buildings, and to assist the artillery in preventing the enemy from advancing.

We now crossed the enemies fire from right to left and took position behind some stacks just on the left of the artillery; and about 30 of the Philadelphia Infantry were under cover of a house on our left and a little in the rear.

About 15 of my men came to this post, but I could not keep them all there, for the enemies fire was dreadful and three balls, for they were very thick, had grazed me; one passed within my elbow nicking my great coat and carried away the breech of Sargeant McKnatts gun, he being close behind me, another carried away the inside edge of one of my shoesoles, another had nixed my hat and indeed they seemed as thick as hail.

From these stacks and buildings we, with the two pieces of artillery kept up a continuous fire on the enemy, and in all probability it was this circumstance that prevented the

enemy from advancing, for they could not tell the number we had posted behind these covers and were afraid to attempt passing them; but if they had known how few they were they might easily have advanced while the two brigades were in confusion and routed the whole body for it was a long time before they could be reorganized again, and indeed many, that were panic struck, ran quite off.

Gen. Washington having rallied both Gen. Mercers and Gen. Cadwaladers brigade they moved forward and when they came to where the artillery stood began a very heavy platoon fire on the march. This the enemy bore but a few minutes and then threw down their arms and ran.

We then pushed forward towards the town spreading over the fields and through the woods to enclose the enemy and take prisoners.

The fields were covered with baggage which the Gen. ordered to be taken care of.

Our whole force met at the Court House and took there about 200 prisoners and about 200 others pushed off and were pursued by advance parties who took about 50 more.

In this engagement we lost about 20 killed, the enemy about 100 men killed and lost the field.

This is a very pretty little town on the York road 12 miles from Trenton; the houses are built of brick and are very elegant especially the College which has 52 rooms in it; but the whole town has been ravaged and ruined by the enemy.

As soon as the enemy's main army heard our cannon at Princeton (and not 'til then) they discovered our manoeuvre and pushed after us with all speed and we had not been

above an hour in possession of the town before the enemy's light horse and advanced parties attacked our party at the bridge but our people by a very heavy fire kept the pass until our whole army left the town.

Just as our army began our march through Princeton with all their prisoners and spoils the van of the British army we had left at Trenton came in sight, and entered the town about an hour after we left it, but made no stay and pushed on towards Brunswick for fear we should get there before him, which was indeed the course our General intended to pursue had he not been detained too long in collecting the Baggage and Artillery which the enemy had left behind him.

Our army marched on to Kingston then wheeled to the left and went down the Millstone, keeping that River on our left; the main body of the British army followed, but kept on through Kingston to Brunswick: but one division or a strong party of horse took the road to the left of the Mill'stone and arrived on the hill, at the bridge on that road just as the van of the American Army arrived on the opposite side.

I was again commanding the van of our army, and General Washington seeing the enemy, rode forward and ordered me to halt and take down a number of carpenters which he had ordered forward and break up the bridge, which was done and the enemy were obliged to return.

We then marched on to a little village called Stone brook or Summerset Court House about 15 miles from Princeton where we arrived just at dusk. About an hour before we

arrived here 150 of the enemy from Princeton and 50 which were stationed in this town went off with 20 wagons laden with Clothing and Linen, and 400 of the Jersey militia who surrounded them were afraid to fire on them and let them go off unmolested and there were no troops in our army fresh enough to pursue them, or the whole might have been taken in a few hours.

Our army was now extremely fatigued not having had any refreshment since yesterday morning, and our baggage had all been sent away the morning of the action at Trenton, yet they are in good health and in high spirits.

January 4th 1777

At daylight this morning our army was put in motion and passed on towards Brunswick and crossed the Raritan over a bridge 6 miles above that Town, but the General found the army was too much fatigued to attempt Brunswick as the enemy's main body were so close after us, he therefore changed his course and went on to a place called Pluckemin situated among the mountains of Jersey about 10 miles from the last place. Here he was obliged to encamp and await the coming up of nearly 1000 men who were not able through fatigue and hunger to keep up with the main body, for they had not had any refreshment for two days past and as all our baggage had been left at Trenton the army in this situation was obliged to encamp on the bleak mountains whose tops were covered with snow, without even blankets to cover them. Most of this army were militia and they bore all this with a spirit becoming Freemen and Americans.

Pluckemin Jan. 4th 1777

To-day we continued here and our troops were pretty well supplied with provisions and in the evening most of those who had laged behind came up. Here Sergeant McKnatt was accidentally shot through the arm by one of our own people, who fired off his musket to light a fire and as there was not one surgeon in the whole army I was forced to dress it myself and the next day got one of the prisoners to do it. The surgeons not being informed of the movement of the army at Trenton did not hear of it until daylight and then were so frightened that they fled towards Philadelphia for their lives.

Pluckemin January 5th 1777

The General continued here to-day to refresh the army. Capt. Henry [the senior captain of the Philadelphia Light Infantry, who has had command of this regiment] has been sent to carry the news of the victory at Princeton to Congress and I as the next captain in seniority have the command.

This morning the General ordered 40 of our light Infantry to attend the funeral of Col. Leslie one of the enemy, to bury him with the honors of war. They readily obeyed in paying due respect to bravery, though in an enemy, but as I had not paid any attention to Military Funeral Ceremonies I requested Capt. Humpries to conduct it.

I had nothing to cover me here but my great coat but luckily got into a house near the mountains where I fared very comfortably while we stayed here.

[On the retreat of the British, leaving their wounded on

the field, General Washington, accompanied by Benjamin Rush, M.D., surgeon-in-chief, saw a handsome young officer wounded and inquired his name, and was told it was Captain Leslie. Dr. Rush immediately dismounted, and with the aid of a servant had him placed on a suitable vehicle and brought him with the American army.

I will state in corroboration of the statement of the burial of Captain Leslie by the Delaware troops, that the Hon. Ronald Leslie Melville, brother of the Earl of Leven and Melville, and Mr. Hugh McCulloch's partner, mentioned, when he visited this country last year, that one of his ancestors, a young British officer, had fallen here during the Revolution, and that the family had never been able to learn where he was buried. An American friend of Mr. Melville has just found the grave, well preserved, in the graveyard at Pluckemin, N.J. Over it was a monument erected by Dr. Benjamin Rush, to whom the young Captain Leslie's father had been kind in Edinburgh.

The following is the inscription upon this monument:

"In memory of the Hon. Captain William Leslie, of the 17th British Regiment, son of the Earl of Leven, in Scotland.

"He fell January 3d, 1777, aged twenty-six years, at the battle of Princeton. His friend, Benjamin Rush, M.D., of Philadelphia, hath caused this stone to be erected as a mark of esteem for his worth and of his respect for his noble family. Wounded on the 3d, brought to Pluckemin, twenty miles from Princeton, on the 4th died within sight of the village, buried on the 5th with military honors."]

Morristown Jan. 6th 1777

We left Pluckemin this morning and arrived at Morristown just before sunset. The order of march, was first a small advance guard, next the officers who were prisoners, next my Light Infantry Regiment in column of four-deep; next the prisoners flanked by the riflemen, next the head of the main column, with the artillery in front.

Our whole Light Infantry are quartered in a very large house belonging to Col. Ford having 4 Rooms on a floor and Two stories high.

This town is situated among the mountains of Morris county, about 18 miles from Elizabethtown, 28 from Brunswick and 50 from Carrolls Ferry.

Morristown January 7th 1777

This morning General Washington appointed my Infantry Regiment to be his own guard (for the reason I suppose that they had distinguished themselves at Princeton and were the only Regiment in the army that were in complete uniform which was green faced with red).

This day I was myself officer of the Guard whose duties consist in mounting 26 of the infantry every day, and for this service we are excused from all other camp duties.

Here a circumstance happened that commenced the downfall of Gen. Mifflin.

When I waited on the General to fix his guards, there was no guard house prepared, and he referred me to M. G. Mifflin who was then acting as Q. M. G. and with whom I had long been acquainted, but upon my application Mifflin said that there was no house and that he had all the busi-

ness of the army to do; I answered if that was the case I would return his answer to the General and bade him adieu, but he sent one of his aides after me to procure a house, but now there was none to be had, excepting one that had been used as a hospital; I told the aid that all the volunteers under my command were gentlemen and should not lodge in such a house and then returned to the General and informed him that if he thought it necessary, the guards having no house, should encamp near his quarters, but he politely requested, that I would let our own quarters be the guard house, which was about a mile from him; so the guards were relieved at that distance.

January 8th 1777

We received information to-day that the Enemy were at Brunswick and were so much frightened that they did not take time to inspect either Trenton or Princetown.

January 9th 1777

We are informed to-day that General Maxwell has taken a number of wagons and prisoners near Elizabethtown and that General Putnam has crossed the Delaware with 2000 men.

The Philadelphia officers of the Regiment applied to me to-day, to represent to the General the propriety of the officer of the Day, on guard, dining at his table,—but I replied that such an invitation should come from the General himself, and, if he was not courtly enough to confer that honor on the officer of the guard, he would feel it as a censure on his want of Etiquet if it was pressed upon him, and there-

fore advised them, in case the General omitted this compliment, to consider their own tables as pleasant and honorable as his, that true honor consisted in acts of virtue and that the merit of their patriotism would not be lessened by the General omitting the required compliment.

January 10th 1777

The time that my men enrolled for expired to-day and most of them seemed determined to go home, upon which I went to Gen. Cadwalader and brought him to our quarters and he informed them of the necessity of their staying a few days longer which they all agreed to do except Millis, Dawson, Pennington, Croket and Maxwell who said they *would* go but none of them went but Millis.

January 11th 1777

Col. Ford the owner of the house where we are quartered died to-day.

We heard to-day that General Maxwell with 1500 men has taken Elizabethtown with 20 wagons of baggage, one schooner loaded with stores and 120 prisoners, and that Gen. Putnam has left Trenton with 2000 men.

January 12th 1777

This day Leut. McCall, who was left or lagged behind us at Trenton rejoined us. By his story he came with the rear of the army to the battle of Princeton, but was not in the action and meeting with the body of Col. Haslet was about to bury him when a number of our officers who he took to be Light Horse appeared on the hill which frightened him

so that he did not stop until he had crossed the Delaware where he got Mr. McGermotts horse at Mr. Coxes and came to us here.

But 8 or 10 of the Light Infantry, of the 2d Battallion of Philadelphia, say he came on the ground with them, and as soon as the bullets began to fly he ran as hard as he could for the woods.

Robert McGermot also returned to-day from Bristol with my clothes.

January 13th 1777

The Infantry were called on to-day to bury Col. Ford with the honors of war and I appointed Capt. Nezbit to command.

General Mercer is likely to recover altho' we had numbered him with the dead.

January 14th 1777

This day the Infantry were ordered to bury General Hitchcock with the honors of war and as he was a continental officer I took the command myself.

[Here follows a long description of the funeral ceremonies of General Hitchcock, which I omit.]

This day most all my company set off home though I tried all in my power to prevail on them to stay until the brigade went.

January 15th 1777

To-day Lieut. McCall, Tilton and Bullen who thought it was not worth while to stay as the rest were gone set off for home too, and left no one with me but Robert McGermot. I dined to-day with Gens. Cadwalader and Dickinson.

January 16th

Hearing that my brother had crossed the Delaware with a number of troops, I determined to set off to-day to meet him but was prevailed upon by Dr. Miller to wait for him until to-morrow.

January 17th 1777

We received information this morning, that Gen. Heath is in possession of Fort Washington and is moving towards New York with 8000 men.

I remained here to-day in Morristown waiting for Dr. Miller, who cannot get a horse to go with.

January 18th 1777

This morning about 10 o'clock I left Morristown with Robert McGermot, who stayed with me, and took our route through Vealtown and Pluckemin to Summerset Court House; we had not left Morristown many miles before we met sundry persons who had heard much canonade towards New York; and all the way to the Raritan most of the people we met had heard it, but just after we reached the Court House, a man came in, who had left Elizabeth at 9 o'clock in the morning, and said, that a canonade began at York at 2 o'clock in the morning and continued until he came 10 or 15 miles on his way: From this information we conclude that a general attack has been made on New York by General Heath.

As there was nothing to be had in the Tavern at this place we put up at the house of a man who had just ob-

tained some rum and said he could make us a drink; he found hay and a stable for our horses, and we sent out and got some corn. Here we fell in with a gentlemen from New York who invited us to lodge with him at a Dutch Doctors, just by, and we accepted the offer and were very agreeably entertained by the Doctor. He told us that Col. Mawhood who afterwards commanded the British forces at the battle of Princeton and Major Moyney boarded at his house; that they were both exceedingly clever, especially the Colonel, who often expressed himself very freely, lamenting the American contest very much, and pronouncing lord North a villian for being the cause of it. They were both at his house when Gen. Lee was brought there, a prisoner, by the Light Horse, that Major Moyney immediately ran out and kissed Gen. Lee with tears in his eyes, and the General told him he never expected to see him in America. They all dined there together and Gen. Lee requested that the man who had betrayed him should be brought in, and when the General saw him he abused him as a villian worthy the punishment of the most base and inhuman traitor.

The Doctor could not remember the villians name but said that he was a continental officer dressed in blue faced with red and wore a brown cloak, lined with blue baize; that he heard him tell the Colonel, that he had been in the Continental service but that he had got tired of it, and had lately given the British army all the information in his power, and now that he had informed the light horse of Gen. Lee, and had gone with them, and shown them where he was so that they now had him in their

possession, he hoped they would remember and reward him.

The Doctor says that he took such particular notice of the villian that tho' he forgot his name he will never forget his face.

He also told us that Col. Mahood, on the evening of Christmas day, was blaming the English Generals for dispersing their army so much, and said that if he was in Gen. Washingtons place he would make an attack on several of the principle posts at the same time;—that they were all so weak that he could certainly cut them off, and be in possession of all Jersey in a few days.

It so happened that about 10 o'clock next day, a light horseman came express, and informed the major who ran out, that Gen. Washington had taken Trenton with 1200 prisoners, upon which the major rushed in and said "well Col. Gen. Washington has executed your last night's plan already for he has taken Trenton with 1200 prisoners this morning."

January 19th 1777

We went on from Summerset Court House to Princeton and rode out to see the Battle field and then went on towards Trenton intending to see one Mr. Steenes on the road but falling in with Mr. Tucker, a member of Congress, who lives in Trenton, he informed me that my brother, with his brigade, was there and I came on with him to Trenton where I met my brother and his troops.—I found them all well and had the pleasure of hearing that my family were well when they left Dover.

January 20th 1777

When I came here I had thoughts of going on home, but my brother insisted on my acting as Brigade major for him, as he could not find a suitable person to perform that duty.

January 21st 1777

This morning Col. Collins and the Delaware Militia marched from this place for Princeton.

We are informed that 400 Militia attacked 800 Regulars at Millstone and took 17 Prisoners, 100 horses, 35 loaded wagons and a great number of cattle.

January 22d 1777

Another battalion marched from here to join Gen. Putnam at Princeton, and another came in the afternoon and the troops about Mt. Holly are we are informed to march to-morrow. We also have certain information that Gen. Heath has taken fort Independence.

January 23d 1777

This morning the body of Col. Haslet left here, having been taken up at Princeton and is to be sent to Philadelphia to be buried with the honors of war.

The second troop of Virginia light horse passed thro' this town for headquarters.

A hessian who is Capt. of artillery in our service informed us to-day that he went with a flag of truce to Brunswick on Monday last, and saw the enemy's foraging party come in with 60 wagons as hard as they could drive, and with but a handful of hay in each, not amounting in all to two loads.

An English officer taking him to be a hessian officer in their own service rode up and asked him if he had heard how the rebels had beaten them, and that he answered that he knew nothing about it, that he belonged to that army they called rebel, upon which the officer asked his pardon and rode off. He says their army at Brunswick does not exceed 5000 men.

January 24th 1777

One of the light Horse who was present informs us that Gen. Dickerson on Monday took 106 horses, 44 loaded wagons, 90 head of Cattle and 80 head of sheep.

Putnams party took 17 wagons the same day.

That last night a small party advanced and fired 3 rounds upon the guards at Brunswick and put the whole army under arms, created the greatest disorder and then retired unhurt.

January 25th 1777

This morning about 10 o'clock I left Trenton and my brother, who was to march to Princeton next morning. Though horses and wagons crossed the River on the ice yesterday the great rain that fell last night has broken it up and this morning I crossed over in a boat, a little above the island, opposite the town, and at the same time the last troop of Virginia Light Horse were passing over to the camp.

I called at Mr. Wm. Coxes on the Neshaminy where I had left my baggage. The family were exceedingly polite and friendly in consideration of my guardianship while stationed there. I then went on to Philadelphia and called at

old Mr. William Allens to see Mrs. Andrew Allen and deliver to her a letter from her father and was received by her and the old gentlemen with great affection, in consideration of my care of Mrs. Allen and her family while there. I then went to see the Fishers, but they were all gloomy, I reminded them that they were mistaken and that all was accomplished that I had foretold them but they affected not to believe it and I left them and from Philadelphia came on home where I found all well on the 28th of January 1777.

APPENDIX.

LETTER A.

COL. HASLET TO MR. RODNEY.

DR. AND WORTHY SIR: When I last wrote you God knows, I do not: this I can affirm—that I have received no answer.

After a long retreat, from a full conviction of the enemy's superior numbers, but performed in order, with a firm determined countenance, we at last stopt on 'ye banks of Delaware—there we were stationed. Thank you, says Genl. Rodney.

On Christmas, at 3 o'clock [on Christmas night,—that is, really, the early morning of December 26th.—ED.] we recrossed the river; a party of Virginians formed the vanguard and did most of the fighting. Lord Stirling's brigade had the honor of fighting 1000 Hessians to a surrender. We should have gone on, and panic-struck they would have fled before us, but the inclemency of the weather rendered it impossible. We repassed the river, rested one day, and then were ordered back. I'm sorry to inform the Genl. [General Rodney is meant, of course] that Capt. Holland,

Ensign Wilson, Dr. Gilder, and myself are all [of the Delaware battalion] who have followed the American cause to Trenton, two privates excepted. On Genl. Washington being informed of this, he declared his intention of having officers and men bound neck and heels and brought back as an example to the army. I told the Genl. the truth, but not the whole truth; the last I reserved for you, and you will blush with me.

Seven Philadelphia light-horse yesterday brought in nine light-horsemen, with one horse, who were sent to impress wagons. We just now hear that the bridge on this side Princeton is cut down, and the enemy retiring—a sufficient number of troops are ready to drive them out of Jersey. We hope to greet you well.

On our victorious return from Trenton, I fell into the Delaware, at 3 o'clock, in the morning, up to my middle—have had . . . and swelled legs ever since. But no matter, if we drive them to New York. If I return it will be to salute you; if not we shall meet in Heaven. Your goodness will give Mrs. Haslet such news as you think proper.

I have Gen'l. Washington's leave to return and superintend the recruiting service at home, but cannot go for a few days longer; hope soon to lay myself at your feet, and am, with great esteem and sincerity yours,

JOHN HASLET.

P.S.—The four Allens, we hear, are with Genl. Howe, Galloway, &c.—the former fled, his brother the General in pursuit. Mr. Tilghman informed the General in my hearing that the Dover light-horse were coming up. Is it so? I

shall believe, like Thomas, when I see it. Genl. Washington is Dictator. [By resolution of Congress, passed December 27.]

I mentioned to Lord Stirling t'other day that I thought myself dismissed from the service, on Col. Smallwood's being favored before me. What made the case in point was the dispute of rank between us [mentioned in a former letter.—Ed.] determined by the General himself in my favour. The preference was, as in General Wooster's case, a modest hint to retire. They both remonstrated. I shall not take my resolution till I see you, nor can I give the reasoning, pro and con, at large. I hope you rec'd my last; it was a sort of journal, closed at Brunswick one day with "God bless you! we shall certainly drive them off."

The hand of Ishmael was here, meaning Dr. Miller, a very important part of the Delaware regiment at present. Gilder is sick; he is to serve with me at the head of Lord Stirling's brigade and insists on his compliments to Misses Wilson, Nixon, Killens, and the General himself, if he pleases to accept them.

[The address on the foregoing letter is gone, but it is endorsed as follows:]

"1st Jany., 1777, Trenton."

"From Col. Haslet to Cæsar Rodney, a few days before he fell at Trenton."

"Will meet him in Heaven."

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Diary of Captain Thomas Rodney, 1776-177



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